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DE RUEHLM #0423 1201313  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 291313Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8056  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0861  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7854  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 6035  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4370  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1992  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 4367  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3462  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 8459  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5926  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0633  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2734  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000423

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: POLICE ARREST CHILD TRAFFICKING  
SUSPECTS; RECRUITMENT AGENTS DISCUSS BEST PRACTICES

REF: COLOMBO 215

¶1. On April 28, the National Child Protection Authority disclosed the arrest of four suspects involved in trafficking more than 20 children to Singapore over an extended period of time. NCPA Chairman Jagath Wellawatta said that in January, three Sri Lankan children, ages 11, 13, and 14, were found deserted at the Singapore airport. They were flown back to Sri Lanka last week at NCPA expense and are currently under the care of the Salvation Army. The parents of the children, who allegedly sold them for Rs. 1.8 million (USD 18,000) each, were taken into custody for questioning. The parents say the children, who were residents of Jaffna, were sent abroad with the parents' consent because of the prevailing security situation. According to the NCPA, the alleged traffickers were attempting to take the children to the United Kingdom on false Malaysian passports.

¶2. Separately, two groups of employment agents from Sri Lanka and Kuwait met in Kuwait on April 23 to discuss the problems of Sri Lankan migrant workers. Over 100 employment agents attended. The Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agents of Sri Lanka (ALFEA) and the Sri Lankan Manpower Association of Kuwait (SLMAK) agreed that the industry should take responsibility for the welfare of workers and address problems that are giving the industry a "bad name." On April 24, the two groups signed a memorandum of understanding pledging to "do good business and ensure people are protected." The groups discussed the importance of preventing abuse of workers by their employers, making sure proper contracts are signed, and ensuring that agreed upon wages are paid on time.

¶3. COMMENT: The arrest of four individuals involved in a child trafficking ring is welcome news and shows increased involvement of the GSL in anti-trafficking efforts. Post finds it encouraging that the migrant labor industry in Sri Lanka is taking some responsibility for ensuring the welfare of its workers. Ambassador will meet with the NCPA head later this week to urge the GSL to follow through with prosecuting these trafficking cases. Embassy will also follow up with recruitment agents, through their umbrella

association, to make sure these promises are put into action.

BLAKE